



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Huron-Manistee National Forests
Manistee Ranger Station
412 Red Apple Road
Manistee, Michigan 49660

231-723-2211 (Voice)
231-723-8642 (Fax)
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File Code: 1950

Date: March 2, 2010

Dear County Line Fuels Project Participant:

An Environmental Assessment (EA) has been conducted for the County Line Fuels Project and is enclosed for your review. This letter provides you notice of the opportunity to comment on the activities proposed in the County Line Fuels Project Environmental Assessment. The Project will also be made available on the Huron-Manistee National Forests' website at: www.fs.fed.us/r9/hmnf/pages/CountyLine.

The Forest Service is proposing to conduct fuels management activities utilizing vegetative treatments and a system of fuelbreaks in the County Line Fuels Project Area. The County Line Fuels Project is located on the Cadillac-Manistee Ranger District of the Huron-Manistee National Forests in T20N, R16W, Sections 1-8, 11-14, and 16 of Freesoil Township, Mason County, MI. The County Line Fuels Project Environmental Assessment describes four alternatives that provide different levels of treatment on National Forest System land. The alternatives include the following:

- **Alternative 1:** Maintains the current level of activity for the area (No Action).
- **Alternative 2:** The Proposed Action that was described during scoping but slightly modified. This alternative would implement the most vegetative treatments and controlled burning use in the Project Area, and management activities would occur to improve wildlife habitat.
- **Alternative 3:** Developed from comments received during the scoping period and from IDT members. It responds to comments regarding the large areas of sanitation and clearcut harvesting and replacing those treatments with shelterwood harvesting. Additional stands would be treated for barren restoration. In addition, this alternative reduces the amount of pile burning and increases the use of mechanical treatments to treat wildlife openings. There would also be an increased use of fuelbreaks on stands that have been dropped from other mechanical treatments.
- **Alternative 4:** Developed from comments received during the scoping period. It responds directly to the issue of the safety of using controlled burning, reducing the risk by limiting the amount of both broadcast and pile burning. It also responds to comments on the large areas of sanitation and clearcut harvesting by reducing those treatments and replacing them with shelterwood harvesting. This alternative reduces the amount of prescribed burning and uses mechanical treatments to achieve fuel reduction targets. It also increases the use of linear fuelbreaks on high priority areas.

Alternative 3 has been identified as the preferred alternative at this time. A final determination of the selected alternative will be made after all public input is received and considered. Based on this input, a different alternative or a modified alternative may be selected.

This 30-day comment period provides the final pre-decisional opportunity for public review of these proposed actions and the environmental analysis. Comments must be received or postmarked within 30 calendar days following publication of this notice in the *Manistee News Advocate*. However, when the comment period ends on a Saturday, Sunday, or Federal holiday, it is extended to the close of business



of the next Federal working day. In order to have standing to appeal a decision under 36 CFR 215, you must submit substantive comments during the 30-day comment period. Substantive comments are defined as comments that are within the scope of the proposed action, are specific to the proposed action, have a direct relationship to the proposed action, and include supporting reasons for the Responsible Official to consider.

Comments should be submitted to the Responsible Official: Jim A. Thompson, District Ranger, at Cadillac-Manistee Ranger District, 412 Red Apple Road, Manistee, Michigan 49660; (Office hours 8-4:30, M-F) Telephone: 231-723-2211; TTY/TDD: 231-723-0124 (hearing impaired); Fax: 231-723-8642; email: comments-eastern-huron-manistee-manistee@fs.fed.us. E-mail attachments must be readable by Microsoft Office 2000 or Adobe. If you have any questions, or need further information on this proposal, please contact Mark Herberger, at (231) 723-2211, ext. 3109.

Comments related to this project should include the following information: 1) your name, address, and (if possible) telephone number; 2) the title of the project you are submitting comments on; and 3) specific facts or comments, along with supporting reasons that you believe I should consider in reaching a decision.

Comments received in response to this project will become a matter of public record. For appeal eligibility, each individual or representative from each organization must either sign comments or verify identity upon request. Only those who submit timely and substantive comments during the 30-day comment period will be accepted as appellants. Copies of the resulting decision will be mailed to those people who have submitted comments prior to the close of the comment period and to those who request a copy.

I appreciate your interest and involvement with this project.

Sincerely,



JIM A. THOMPSON
District Ranger

Enclosure

Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record on this proposed action and will be available for public inspection. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered; however those who submit anonymous comments will not have standing to appeal the subsequent decision under 36 CFR Parts 215. Additionally, pursuant to 7 CFR 1.27(d), any person may request the agency to withhold a submission from the public record by showing how the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) permits such confidentiality. Persons requesting such confidentiality should be aware that confidentiality is granted in only very limited circumstances. The Forest Service will inform the requester of its decision regarding a request for confidentiality, and where the request is denied, the submission will be returned and the requester notified that the comments may be resubmitted with or without name and address.

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